

Case History: West Oakland

- **Describe the impacted community (population, neighborhood, general statistics, history, etc).**

West Oakland. 25,000 residents, 93% people of color, low income.

- **What are/were the problems affecting the community?**

Problems include extraordinarily high rates of poverty, crime, and environmental health impacts such as asthma as well as intense redevelopment pressure with associated potential gentrification impacts. The community is completely surrounded by freeways and immediately adjacent to the Port of Oakland, which is projected to experience a tripling of goods movement by 2020.

- **What partnerships were formed to address the problems and challenges?**

The community came together in 2000-2002 and carried out a prioritization exercise in which it identified 17 environmental indicators. The community then formed partnerships with several environmental and health agencies, other neighborhood organizations, local businesses, truckers, labor and other sectors to tackle environmental health problems, with a primary focus on air toxics, diesel pollutants and land use. The current collaborative (also described below) has approximately 3 dozen active stakeholders.

- **What were the major challenges the community faced or faces in overcoming the problems?**

1. One of the largest challenges has been port-related impacts, as the balance of trade is driving a projected tripling of goods movement through California ports by 2020. Balancing community health against this economic momentum is a huge challenge and has required engaging the major economic players.
2. Getting the major economic players (the port, shippers) to come to the table and play in good faith.

- **How did the community overcome the challenges? If the community wasn't able to address the challenges, what were the impacts on the project? How did the project move forward?**

The community has co-convened, along with EPA the West Oakland Toxic Reduction Collaborative and made progress in the area of Healthy Homes and indoor air, health impact assessments, clean fuels, truck clean-up, brownfields and other port-related impacts.

- **What tools or methods did the community use that are transferable to other communities facing similar issues?**

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1. Collaborative approaches to level the playing field, get more decisions out on the table in a transparent basis.
2. The community has used EPA funding to seed, leverage and support funding from several other sources.

• **What were the major successes in the eyes of the community?**

1. Trucks: Engaged Port of Oakland and other parties to collaborate on clean-up of 2500 trucks serving the Port in ways that are equitable to all stakeholders. Worked with PG&E and other stakeholders in conversion of 11 trucks to NG; more conversions coming up. Alternative fuel infrastructure funded.
2. 25 plus residents have undergone train-the-trainer training for indoor air.
3. Consultation provided on land uses – senior center mitigation measures. Engaged City, Port and other stakeholders on land use plan to relocate truck services out of residential areas.
4. 85% risk reduction (by 2020) target put forward for port related diesel pollutants. Previous benchmark was "no net increase" in emissions.
5. Biodiesel business plan developed.
6. State brownfields program adopted into community co-lead collaborative structure; major turnaround in how program functions in this community.
7. Top ranking stationary source (risk) voluntarily shut down following lengthy negotiations over mitigation measures. Site now projected for mixed housing (market rate/low income.)

Community Leaders: Margaret Gordon and Brian Beveridge, Co-chairs of the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project, are residents of West Oakland. Brian is also Co-Chair of the West Oakland Toxic Reduction Collaborative, and he and Margaret co-chair several of the eight working groups making up the Collaborative. Their membership in numerous organizations and on numerous advisory boards at the local, regional and state levels is due in large part to their demonstrated leadership on the issues of environmental justice, goods movement and community health.